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John Stainton

William Weismantel

July 13, 1967

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BUILDING
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Comments on Landauer's Land Use and Marketability Report
for Back Bay

Three alternate future visions of the Back Bay residential district come to mind after reading Landauer's report. By residential district I mean Newbury, Commonwealth, Marlborough and Beacon Streets from the Public Garden to Charlesgate East.

Future A. Successful High Rise--Row House Mix

New high rise stimulates rehabilitation of the lower buildings throughout the area. Together, these attract many new households of \$7,000/year and over class, which upgrades the prestige of Back Bay and balances the present hippie trend here.

Future B. Unsuccessful High Rise--Row House Mix

New high rise fails to stimulate rehabilitation of row houses. High rise face out towards Public Garden or Charles River, on Arlington Street and the water side of Beacon Street, trying to ignore the "environmental sink" overlooking the middle of the district. In the middle, old row houses get older without benefit of rehabilitation, except the worst kind: conversion to tiny apartments, dormitories, rooming houses, fraternities. William Lloyd Garrison's statue on the Commonwealth Mall is pulled down and Dr. Timothy Leary's lifted onto the empty pedestal during one of the spontaneous love-ins.

Future C. Focus on Row House Rehabilitation

Future high rise are either prohibited altogether, or limited to the eight corner sites permitted by the Park Frontages ordinance adopted by the City Council at BRA urging in December 1965. (West corners of Commonwealth Avenue at A, B, C and D streets.) The rest of Back Bay is controlled to 70' height. The effect is to focus

the demand for medium and luxury rental quarters in Back Bay to the low buildings, resulting in widespread general rehabilitation and restoration of the prestige of the Back Bay district.

Discussion

The Landauer report urges Future A, the Successful High Rise--Row House Mix. Their report does not remove the specter of Future B, the Unsuccessful High Rise--Row House Mix. A plan to accomplish Future A may slip in Future B. Therefore I urge Future C, the Focus on Row House Rehabilitation for these reasons:

1. High rise will dilute ^{Too much} the rehabilitation demand in Back Bay. Landauer (page 42) suggests that Back Bay can absorb about 300-400 more dwelling units per year of medium and luxury class: 200 in high rise, the other 200 in row houses. There are 10,500 row house dwelling units there (in 1965.) If 2%/year are rehabilitated this will take 50 years, which is too long considering that many buildings there have not been improved since Queen Victoria reigned. If instead total annual demand of 400 dwelling units were focused on the rehabilitation of row houses, a 4% rate resulting in a 25 year cycle of rehabilitation, after catching up, would result.

2. High rise are positively harmful to the architectural character of Back Bay. Bainbridge Bunting, in the new book Houses of Boston's Back Bay, states:

"To date the area has demonstrated a remarkable resilience in adapting to types of occupancy other than the one for which most of the buildings were originally designed.....

"The challenge which confronts us now is whether we can forestall the attempt of a few property owners to pull down the present structures and erect new and bigger ones which will destroy the domestic scale and architectural continuity of the district--forestall them long enough for Boston's citizens to awake to the unique architectural importance of the Back Bay district."

The Board has been very busy with the
many matters of importance, and has
been very successful in its work.

Conclusion

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3. High rise in Back Bay would compete with other new dwelling units for medium or luxury tenants near Back Bay which are being sponsored by BRA wither on disposition sites, or by 121 A corporations. Here is a list of dwelling units of this class which BRA hopes to see built and rented in 1967-1974:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Number of Dwelling Units</u>
Prudential Apartments (121A urban development corporation)	793
Waterfront	1260
South Cove	650
South Bay	1250
South End	2800
CBD	1250
Fenway	2750
Total:	<u>9503</u> Dwelling Units

4. We should encourage spreading middle and luxury class tenants around the City, rather than concentrating them in Back Bay, as would result if both high rise and tow house buildings were planned there. The 1965/1975 General Plan for Boston states:

"A basic premise of the Plan is that all residents of the metropolitan area should have equal opportunities to live anywhere in the metropolitan area they choose, and that the denial of these opportunities is detrimental to both the area's economy and its morale.....The policy of the Development Program and this Plan is...to promote stability in the size of Boston's population while increasing the diversity of its composition, so that it more nearly reflects the composition of the Region's population as a whole."

and other civil liberties which you want to see in the
 world. You should be able to see the world as it is,
 and you should be able to see the world as it should be.
 The world is a very beautiful place, and it is a very
 interesting place. It is a place where you can find
 everything that you need, and it is a place where you
 can find everything that you want.

Name of the person	Address
101	1010 1st Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.
102	1020 2nd Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.
103	1030 3rd Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.
104	1040 4th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.
105	1050 5th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.
106	1060 6th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.
107	1070 7th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

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5. The Landauer report has data and suggestions useful towards realizing Future C, The Focused Row House Rehabilitation. It describes healthy rates of household formation; shows the positive relation between new office employment downtown and in Back Bay, and the demand for good rental units in Back Bay; it shows that conversions to apartments has actually been occurring at a faster rate than conversions to institutional use (schools and dormitories); it gives standards for quality rehabilitation (700 square feet per dwelling unit, no more than two apartments per floor, density control over dormitory occupancy, etc.)

William Weismantel
BRA Planning Department
July 13, 1967

WW/mm

Chintan

TO Messrs. Hilgenhurst, Wenniger, Diamond, Ziegler, Pleshaw,
Schocken, Brown

FROM Messrs. Berlandi, Donham and Pangaro

September 22, 1969

SUBJECT Back Bay Zoning and Land Use

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In order to bring into focus the variety of issues and possibilities involved a few things on paper are necessary to help our understanding and to give you a chance to take a wack at it.

Evaluation and Strategy

Our feeling is that the Back Bay tissue is quite healthy; that only small lesions now exist; and that our role is to (1) remove the possibility of their spreading to larger infection, (2) establish a program of preventative care, and (3) then leave the thing alone. (Within the security of our own home we would add that we can then spend our limited time on other, more crucial issues).

Immediacy

It is important that we intervene at this time, however. Given a limited amount of development resources on a city-wide level we need to carefully channel new building impact to the pressure points where their effect will be amplified. We submit that new construction on Beacon Street is not such a pressure point.

Further, if we wish to insure the continued quality of the character of the Back Bay, we must admit-to and encourage rehabilitation, and discourage the wholesale acquisition and demolition of contiguous parcels which are necessary to satisfy the requirements of reasonable F.A.R.'s. The prospect of a proposed or imagined higher intensity of use causes tremendous speculation which results in inflated property values (far in excess of those normally indicated by the capitalization of rental income) which directly prevent rehabilitation. (Who would put money into the rehab of an old building, if we could realize fantastic financial gain by selling the property to a developer interested in building "high-rise"?)

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Institutions-Students

Some mention of institutional presence should be made since the Back Bay serves as a traditional breeding ground. With the germination of new academic institutions comes the problem of large student populations and their demands. If the goal of any Back Bay study is the "restoration of residential character", then these institutions should not be allowed to continue to grow in the area. They, thus far, have ignored the housing of their users and, should they be forced to recognize this responsibility, would certainly be among the first to take advantage of more liberal zoning restrictions. (Beacon Street is clearly not appropriate in these uses.)

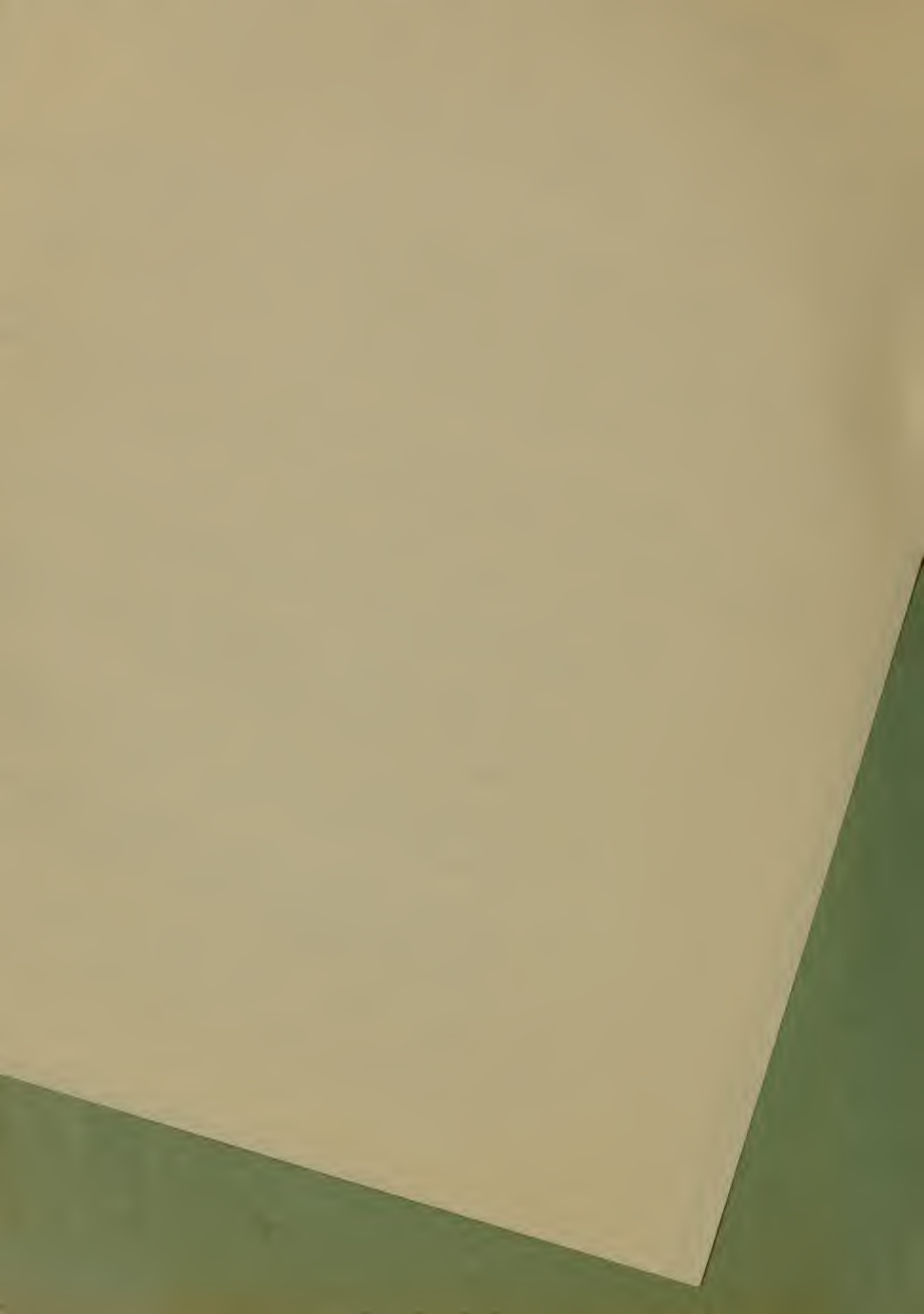
Proposed Alternatives

As an alternative to any high development on Beacon Street, we suggest the regeneration of the more marginal fringe areas of the Back Bay. The edges along Boylston Street and Massachusetts Avenue can provide the square footages required for residential dwelling units as well as commercial and office space (a mixed pattern of land use is certainly viable: e.g., 2 floors of commercial space, 7 floors of office space, and several floors of residential space above.)

These areas, if correctly developed, can provide the opportunity to make the connections to both Huntington Avenue to the south and Charlesgate to the west which are essential to the cohesiveness of what is actually the Back Bay, and the insurance of proper economic growth.

Specific recommendations are as follows:

1. Beacon Street: A 70'/90' envelope for its entire length from Arlington Street to Charlesgate East.
2. Marlborough Street, Commonwealth Avenue, Newbury Street: A 70'/90' envelope for the entire Back Bay, excepting: (a) a 200' limit at Charlesgate East, (b) a 120' limit at Mass. Avenue, (c) see #4 below.
3. Boylston Street: A 200' limit from Arlington Street to Charlesgate East excepting a 160' limit from Clarendon Street to Dartmouth Street to Exeter Street.
4. Arlington Street. Two alternatives seem possible here: 285 feet limit or a 70'/90' limit. (This is subject to the legal problems of total or partial repeal of the Frontage Ordinance)
5. Mass. Avenue: a 120' limit from Beacon to Boylston.
6. Charlesgate East and Charlesgate Street: a 200' limit.



If we are to add valuable ratables to the Boston tax roles, we should not do so by removing already well-paying parcels, but rather by adding under-developed or under-used property of presently lower tax value .

Caveat:

Scare tactics constantly employed by private developers would lead us to believe that we must yield to unquestionable and undivertable "economic pressure". Of course Beacon Street and Arlington Street developments have much pressure behind them; but "Fair Return" is a relative thing - developers want as much as they can get. It should be made absolutely and irreversibly clear that the Back Bay from Beacon to the alley between Boylston and Newbury and from Arlington to Charlesgate excepting Massachusetts Avenue and Charlesgate East is not fair game for the speculative developer. Rather, the intent of this zoning change is to preserve the integrity of a most valuable physical, social and economic entity while allowing both change and growth where it is needed.

Implementation:

Perhaps some incentives are needed to direct development. Among these might be the allowance of a 200' height along Boylston Street (giving economies of foundation piling) in trade for providing apartment units in mixed use buildings, as apposed to single use office buildings. The judicious use of such "bonuses" and not the wholesale giveaway normal to such zoning proposals is the aim.

Our primary device for directing the development of the City away from already viable areas and toward those where it can do more for the common good is the zoning tool. By imposing a highly restrictive ordinance in certain places we effectively provide the incentive to encourage building in others.



419 BOYLSTON STREET
BOSTON, MASS. 02116
TELEPHONE: 267-8070

File-BB, High Rise

Back Bay Federation for Community Development

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TO: Messrs. Hilgenhurst, Wenniger, Diamond,
Ziegler, Schocken, Brown, Berlandi,
Donham and Pangaro

FROM: Daniel J. Ahern, Executive Director

DATE: September 24, 1969

SUBJECT: Proposed Tower for Dartmouth-Beacon Streets

This memorandum is the result of a conversation I had with Paul Donham this morning. I hope it will help us advance toward a resolution of the problem.

Position of Back Bay Civic Groups

Over the past five weeks the Boards of Directors of the three Back Bay civic groups met with Mr. Brainard and received his presentation. These groups are:

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION OF THE BACK BAY--
Representing residents of the area.

BACK BAY ASSOCIATION--
Representing the business community of the area.

BACK BAY FEDERATION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT--
The above two organizations plus other local interests.

All three organizations voted unanimously to support the construction of a high-rise tower of the type proposed by Mr. Brainard at the northeast corner of Dartmouth and Beacon Streets and to approve a second tower at this intersection, when and if that proposal materializes.

None of the groups took specific positions on details of the building. They will do that in the near future. Meanwhile, their position is quite clear. They believe this building, with or without any necessary modifications, should be approved.

The Neighborhood Association is one of the largest and strongest residential associations in the City and it has had very extensive experience with the high-rise question. This organization has conducted studies, produced reports, mobilized great opposition to high-rise buildings on Commonwealth Avenue, and has even taken effective legal action to prevent such construction.

Nevertheless, the organization, for at least eight or ten years and probably longer, has specifically supported the idea of high-rise buildings on the water side of Beacon Street.

In 1967, all three civic organizations approved the Back Bay Development Plan proposal for high-rise buildings on the Beacon Street corners.

Thus, they approved Mr. Brainard's proposal as the beginning of the implementation of this aspect of the Back Bay Development Plan.

Theirs is a well established, carefully prepared and consistent position which (until a few days ago) I would have supposed would be shared by BRA.

Position of BRA

As I understand it, BRA has no jurisdiction over this matter but does function in an advisory capacity to the Architectural Commission and the Board of Appeal. Further, I understand that BRA has not taken any position on this subject. Staff comments to date are, I believe, to be construed as individual and tentative positions only.

If the above understanding is not correct, I would appreciate correction as early as possible.

In conversations with several of the concerned BRA staff members I have found a variety of opinions and objections. It is almost impossible to respond to such a varied and changing group of attitudes.

It would be most helpful to us--and I think it would advance this process--if you could send me a memo explaining the BRA position in reasonable detail on a confidential or nonconfidential basis.

I would not expect to be invited to staff meetings, but if this seems helpful, I will be available for one or more such sessions.

Position of Mr. Warner

I understand that he has taken no position yet, however, he has heard the staff opposing arguments and he is expected to take a position in the near future.

It is my responsibility to inform him of the position of the Back Bay civic groups, either by letter or through a meeting.

If this is done by letter, you will receive a copy. If a meeting is held, I hope that some of the BRA staff representatives will be present.

I will take no action, however, for at least two or three days, in case you wish to make a suggestion or even raise an objection to our communication at this time with Mr. Warner.

Communications to the Commission

I have been asked to submit a memorandum to the Commission and I would suppose that the BRA plans some form of additional submission. I think it would be useful if we exchanged information. If you agree, I will send you copies of my memorandum, which should be ready in five or six days, and will expect to receive or to be shown any further BRA submissions.

Planned Development Area

This development might be eligible for submission as a planned development area. This is being checked. I see no advantage to the developer submitting the proposal this way, since it merely brings him under the full jurisdiction of BRA, which appears to have a hostile attitude toward the project.

There is no advantage to the Back Bay civic groups either, since they are extremely desirous in moving ahead with a total zoning solution, rather than segregating the Dartmouth Street development for separate treatment. Nevertheless, there may be substantial advantages both to the BRA and the Commission in a planned development area submission.

Obviously, the developer would not make a submission as a planned area development (PDA) without some prior positive reaction from BRA. Consequently, it would be useful now to get your preliminary thinking on two questions:

Would BRA encourage a PDA submission?

What are the prospects that BRA might approve twin towers at this site as a PDA project?

Publicity

We do not desire any publicity on this issue at this time and certainly none of us would want any public suggestion of a controversy. However, we must recognize that a large number of people are now aware of this proposal, that the Back Bay Ledger has already given this subject some publicity, and that the civic organizations mentioned above in the near future will need to communicate with their membership of several thousand persons to obtain reassurance that they are properly representing the district.

Consequently, this matter may come to the attention of the Boston newspapers at anytime in the near future.

Zoning

The Brainard proposal is one item which relates to the question of rezoning the Back Bay. We are very anxious to proceed to the Zoning Commission with a comprehensive recommendation for the rezoning of this area.

There are a number of unresolved questions. Some are indicated below with reference to the September 22 BRA memorandum:

L. Beacon Street: The first choice is between the 70-90 ceiling versus high-rise corners. Pending the outcome of the Brainard proposal, we would hope that

BRA staff would explore the possibilities and conditions for the high-rise corners including mechanisms that might be employed to keep high buildings at the corners.

We believe that a straightforward designation of high-rise locations on corners--as previously suggested in some BRA reports--would succeed. If not, we need some incentive-bonus device which would at least tend to restrict the buildings to the corners.

For the balance of this street there is a question as to whether 80-100 would be better than 70-90, in view of the existing heights and historic restrictions.

2. We agree on Commonwealth, Marlborough and Newbury Streets. I would suggest that we must brace ourselves against the pressures for higher ceilings on Newbury Street.

3. Boylston Street: Here we agree generally, although I think the possibilities running from 120-200 ft. should be explored with the alternatives tested. Some thought might be given to the possibility of allowing higher buildings on the south side of the street (the effect of which would be really limited to the Arlington-Clarendon Street blocks).

The complete prescription for Boylston Street must include regulations relative to setbacks, arcades, and I think there should also be a groundfloor rear yard setback combined with the offstreet loading provision.

Meanwhile, we should keep an eye on two current Boylston Street proposals: one for 400 Boylston Street and one before the Appeal Board (which Tony Pangaro and I are working on) for 543 Boylston Street.

Also, I have questions relating to the terminal points at Arlington Street and Mass. Avenue. At Arlington Street there is a question of rezoning in relation to the preservation of the Church. Assuming no church, should not a high-rise tower be allowable? From Hereford Street to Mass. Avenue we have a site under public ownership which might also be considered for additional height and perhaps PDA treatment.

4. On Arlington Street we tend to favor the 285 ft. towers at Commonwealth which might mean rezoning the entire street at that height, although we would prefer that the other corners be kept low. So here we have both a substantive issue and the question of finding mechanisms to make one of the alternatives workable.

5. Mass. Avenue is not a matter of contention, although I hope we can document the feasibility and therefore, meaningfulness of a 120 ft. height limit.

6. Charlesgate East: This should be reviewed, considering the alternatives from the 70-90 ft. limit all the way up to high buildings--possibly 250 or 285 ft. for the entire street (actually three corners).

Commonwealth Avenue Ordinance

In July we spoke with BRA staff about repealing this ordinance, as it applies to six corners but leaving the present controls on the two Arlington Street corners.

In August we submitted a draft ordinance to Commissioner Warner, who seemed to be in agreement but wondered about the strategy and tactics.

BRA is apparently exploring the legal aspects. Hopefully, we will get a report with recommendations and options in the near future.

The Neighborhood Association quite understandably and legitimately is resolved--anxious to move ahead with this ordinance and we would like to see it filed by the Mayor very shortly.

Arthur J. Cornell

TO John D. Warner
cc: D. McInnes
FROM Philip Zeigler
DATE October 2, 1969
SUBJECT BACK BAY

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I think that the meeting yesterday in your office on the tower proposal for Beacon Street went well. As you probably noticed, there is considerable friction between the developer and Ahern, and the staff. Personally, I feel that the proposal was misrepresented to you and that many statements made were either untrue or misleading; namely,

1. The proposal is not consistent with the Back Bay "plan" - in fact, the proposal exceeds the height recommended for this site by about 33%. (The current validity of the Back Bay plan is another question)
2. The proposal is not consistent with current zoning. Our calculations indicate that the proposal would require substantial variances in height and parapet setback.
3. The proposal has obviously not formally been approved by the three Back Bay civic associations. The executive committees of these associations have given an informal blessing only.
4. The height of the structure is not 284 feet, but nearly 300 feet.

While this list could go on, these arguments are really irrelevant to the major issues at hand. Most people agree upon the basic problems in the Back Bay: students, undesirable (and in some cases illegal) conversion of large homes to several smaller units, institutional expansion, parking, and the private and institutional land speculation which is directly influencing the inflated Back Bay real estate market.

On the other hand, few people can agree on appropriate solutions for these problems. Many Back Bay people support Dan Ahern's argument that all of these problems can be solved by encouraging new high-rise luxury development in selected locations of the Back Bay. Although the Back Bay plan lends support to his point of view, there is in fact no evidence which validates this argument. It is true, however, that private rehabilitation and upgrading of existing Back Bay townhouses has not proceeded at a very rapid rate. Moreover, it may be that it is uneconomical at the present time to carry out large scale private rehab due to the rising real estate costs which have resulted from speculation and from the apparent willingness of institutions to outbid other parties for residential properties.

In my opinion, the present Back Bay zoning which tends to promote high rise speculation and the Back Bay plan aggravate this situation. It is also my opinion that acceptance of high rise in the Back Bay, and the resultant impetus it would give to increased speculation, would aggravate the economic picture in the Back Bay to an intolerable degree and would further retard private rehabilitation. The above position is a major issue and a major point of disagreement between the BRA staff and Back Bay interests.

A second argument and issue here concerns the Back Bay as a potentially intown residential area of immense architectural and historical significance. My conservation attitudes toward the Back Bay tend towards the extreme; nevertheless, it is my opinion that the introduction of high rise structures in the Back Bay, whether on Commonwealth, Beacon or Arlington Streets, would open the door to the gradual destruction of the basic character of the Back Bay. Most BRA staff, as well as consultants who worked on the study, are not in agreement with the Back Bay plan's recommendations for high rise sites. At the time of that plan, all involved were simply acting under the direction of the Mayor and under the apprehension that the ideal solution to the



high rise problem (i.e., no high rise) was politically infeasible.

In sum, I think that the staff must address itself to the following real questions:

1. Will the introduction of luxury high rise in the Back Bay result in a substantial upgrading of the remaining residential townhouses and will it help to solve the pressing problems of the Back Bay?
2. What type of zoning envelope for the Back Bay is desirable from a planning, urban design, economic and political point of view and how can it be effected as rapidly as possible?
3. How can the City address itself to the real issues in the Back Bay; namely the influx of students, proliferations of institutions, undesirable and illegal conversions, parking, etc.?
4. Assuming a given market in the City for high rise luxury units, does the City sincerely want to commit a substantial number of these buildings to the Back Bay, or is it in the best interests of the City to channel this market to areas which really need to be bolstered by new development, and where development spinoff effects can be beneficial in achieving other city objectives?

There is a staff meeting scheduled today to discuss this and to arrive at a specific course of action to present to you.

Condominium Plan Excites Back Bay

By ANTHONY J. YUDIS

Globe Staff

Back Bay planners and civic groups who have watched their area grow in the last two years are now eyeing with some excitement and caution the latest building proposal that would promote startling changes on a major block on Beacon st.

Last week, the Globe detailed some of the plans proposed by developer S. R. Brainard to put up the first major "condominium" apartment house in Boston.

Since then more specific details have been disclosed and some planners see the condominium as a "breakthrough" for similar concepts that would restore much of the Back Bay to a family or home-owning residential district rather than retain its present more transient role.

But obviously, not every family who wants to own a home in the Back Bay is able to buy a brownstone mansion. The next logical home ownership plan, then, could be the condominium. Under this concept, each unit in a multi-

unit building is sold directly to a buyer who pays his own real estate taxes and has his own mortgage. He shares the common recreational areas of the building.

Last week, the architects and planners were talking about a building comprising 38 stories for the important Dartmouth st. corner. Also tallied about was a possible 100 residential units.

Brainard, who developed the Glover's Landing apartment complex in Marblehead, overlooking the ocean, presented what may be the final design.

Brainard is president of InterLiving Corp., the company that conceived the plans for transforming the riverside part of the corner.

"The individually owned apartment community will replace 13 existing buildings from 222 to 246 Beacon st., which now provide 125 apartments and only 23 parking spaces," said Brainard.

"We plan to start demolition in the Fall of next year."

In place of the leveled buildings, developers plan to provide 200 units of two to five bedrooms, featuring libraries and separate dining rooms in a combination of one to two-floor duplex arrangements. It's a \$17 million investment.

The final plan proposes two 30-story towers on each corner of Dartmouth st. at Beacon, as well as a mall that will tie in with a longer mall being built by the city from Copley sq., and running the length of Dartmouth st. to the river.

The plan is in keeping with recommendations of the Back Bay Planning and Development Corp. which proposes high-rise towers on all Beacon st. corners. A "twin tower" scheme is in line with the planning study proposals.

Dan Ahern, who directs the planning program for the non-profit BBPDC, when asked about the plan, said that three Back Bay civic groups met with Brainard and reviewed the proposal.

BEACON ST.

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NEW VIEW ALONG FAMED BEACON ST. in the Back Bay would result in plans for 30-story twin-tower "condominium" apartment houses at Dartmouth st. View here is from corner of Dartmouth and Beacon sts. Design plan by Chapman and Goyette would replace 13 existing buildings. Open space and malls are featured.

File-BB: High Rise

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Oct 5, 1978
Globe

518

South of New York City
 near the Hudson River
 near the New York City
 near the Hudson River

1880

Woodbury, N.Y.



Under the
 Spindle
 Pine

Woodbury, N.Y.

ATLANTA, GA. CAMPBELL & CO. PHOTOGRAPHERS
 100 N. W. COR. 10th & Peachtree St. N. W.

Demolition Planned Next Fall for Beacon St.

★ BEACON ST.

Continued from Page 37

"Each group reacted generally and basically in favor, although the 1967 plan proposed lower structures. But there is no final conclusion since architectural evaluations have to be made to determine if the height infringes on the rest of the area."

Indications were that if, as the architectural firm of Chapman and Goyette propose, the plan conforms to the over-all objectives involved for all the Beacon and Dartmouth street area, then acceptance is assured.

"Beacon Street Properties," as the complex would be called, would have all residential units situated at the corners to allow maximum external exposure to light and river view, the architects said. It is being designed within present floor area zoning standards.

The units may be priced from \$50,000 to \$150,000 each, depending on size and interior design. It's believed that initially one tower would be constructed, the other to follow when the condominium market is tested, al-

though Brainard noted that market studies taken indicate a good potential in the Back Bay area for apartment home ownership.

Architecturally, the design shows brick-faced structures that blend with existing brownstones. Bay windows have been added to each unit, and provide a view of the Charles River.

Open balconies also are consistent with traditional Back Bay townhouses, according to architect Allen Chapman. Heated sidewalks, interior parking, and central utility and heating engineering elements also are involved.

Incidentally, a psychiatrist, Dr. W. Madison Presnell of Marblehead is part of the development planning team, "Perhaps the first time a psychiatrist has been directly involved in development of a building program in its actual design stage," said Brainard.

Sales of individual units will be handled by InterLiving Corp. with local realty participation. Financing is being handled by Burlcy, Harkins and Funk, Inc., and construction will

be by Vappi and Co. Inc. of Cambridge.

"We intend not only to invest in a sound financial undertaking, but also in-

tend it to be an initial and significant vote of confidence in a development plan proposed by the Boston Redevelopment Au-

thority and the Back Bay Development Corp. for restoring town elegance to an esthetically pleasing residential community."

Condominium

VIEW FROM N.

(05 ?) 1964

Two 32-story towers

Back Bay Condominiums OK'd

The Neighborhood Assn. of the Back Bay has approved a proposal "in principle" calling for development of high-rise condominiums at Beacon and Dartmouth sts.

The proposal, advanced by developer S. R. Brainard, president of Interliving Corp., calls for twin high-rise units on either side of Dartmouth st., housing a total of 200 two-to-five bedroom residences.

The proposal recently was discussed at a meeting in Fisher Junior College Auditorium.

The vote was 84 to 40 and the action, according to spokesmen, ratified a decision of the association's board which unanimously approved the proposal at a Sept. 16 meeting.

At the Fisher meeting, Brainard and representatives from Chapman & Goyette of Cambridge, the architects who designed "The Beacon Street Properties," showed slides and renderings of the structures.

Exteriors of the buildings feature brick facing and bay windows to harmonize with existing styles of the Back Bay.

"We have been hard at work on the project for over a year," said Brainard.

"Originally we had planned on one tower, but the Back Bay Federation suggested two. Our finished plan calls for two towers with a promenade and park between them.

There were some objections from a minority group over the design aspects.

Brainard said he anticipated that not everyone would be pleased. "We devoted considerable care to the design of the building, creating a detailed scale model of the entire area before we put pen to paper for the actual design, but we realize we could not please everyone and developed the design that would conform more readily with the existing environment of the Back Bay."

The condominium form of home ownership was decided upon, Brainard added, because it would most

readily attract substantial families and thereby contribute to the redevelopment of the Back Bay.

The 32-story structures will be on the waterside of Beacon st. The condominiums would sell for from \$60,000 to \$150,000.

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INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

TO John D. Warner
AT
FROM Back Bay Study Committee
AT

14 October 1969

ATTENTION

SUBJECT

BACK BAY HIGH RISE

Joe Berlandi

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The following staff members are undertaking a study to determine the feasibility of high rise buildings in Back Bay. We hope to complete the study and prepare a staff report for your review by the end of December.

Our efforts will be divided into two phases:

1. Repeal of the Park Frontage Ordinance amendment which allows high rise on 8 Commonwealth Avenue corners. (This will be completed within the next two weeks.)

2. Report on the overriding issue of high rise within the Back Bay Residential District. This report will introduce a zoning envelope to effectively direct the development of Back Bay which will be presented for Zoning approval.

The staff will be meeting regularly to examine the information and data to be provided by various members of the Committee. Joe Berlandi was appointed to coordinate the study program. The Study Committee is as follows:

Charles Hilgenhurst
Mace Wenniger
Steve Diamond
Tony Pangaro
Tom O'Brien

Phil Zeigler
Bob Pleshaw
Ralph Partan
Kristin O'Connell ✓
Joe Berlandi

JJB/mb

cc: Study Committee
Don McInnis



INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

TO Back Bay Study Committee
FROM Cecile Cohen
DATE 17 October 1969
SUBJECT BACK BAY HIGH RISE ISSUE

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Robert Pleshaw is calling a meeting of the Back Bay study committee Monday, October 20th at 10:00 AM in room 962. The following people should be prepared to discuss the issues mentioned at last Thursday's meeting:

Joe Berlandi - code enforcement statement

Steve Diamond
Phil Zeigler - expression of staff attitude

Tony Pangaro - cash flow analysis
standard rehab costs

Ralph Partan - brief history of the evolution of the high rise in Back Bay
code to limit the number of unrelated people living in an apartment
consequences of high rise on the northerly side of Beacon Street
comparison of social and economic problems in Back Bay with Georgetown and the West Village

Tom O'Brien - data collected to date

It is very important for all members to attend this meeting. We must have a policy statement prepared for Mr. Warner by Thursday, October 23, 1969.

cc: Charles Hilgenhurst Phil Zeigler
Mace Wenniger Bob Pleshaw
Steve Diamond Ralph Partan
Tony Pangaro Kristin O'Connell
Tom O'Brien Joe Berlandi
Paul Donham

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD
DATE: 10/10/50
SUBJECT: [illegible]

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

TO Back Bay Study Committee
 FROM Cecile Cohen
 DATE 20 October 1969
 SUBJECT BACK BAY HIGH RISE STUDY

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Robert Pleshaw is calling another meeting of the Back Bay study committee Wednesday, October 22nd at 10:00 AM in room 962. The purpose of this meeting is to combine the various data that has been collected. Everyone should have a written report prepared at this time.

Joe Berlandi - prepare a draft code enforcement including health and safety codes. Give examples of the most outstanding violations now existing and how they can be curbed.

prepare a code limiting the number of unrelated people in an apartment.

prepare a statement of methods to be used to stop the issuance of licenses for rooming houses.

prepare a zoning history of Back Bay.

prepare a procedure for revoking the Commonwealth Avenue ordinance in relation to high rise.

Tony Pangaro - cash flow analysis and standard rehab costs.

Paul Donham - prepare a brief history of the Georgetown townhouses.

Bob Pleshaw - prepare statement discussing possibility of making Back Bay an urban renewal area.

Steve Diamond -

Phil Zeigler - prepare a brief history of Back Bay for the last 25 years.

Ralph Partan - prepare a report on the controls that would be necessary for high rise development in this area.

prepare a report on limiting parking to Back Bay residents only.

cc: Charles Hilgenhurst Tom O'Brien Phil Zeigler
 Mace Wenniger Joe Berlandi Bob Pleshaw
 Steve Diamond Paul Donham Ralph Partan
 Tony Pangaro Kristin O'Connell

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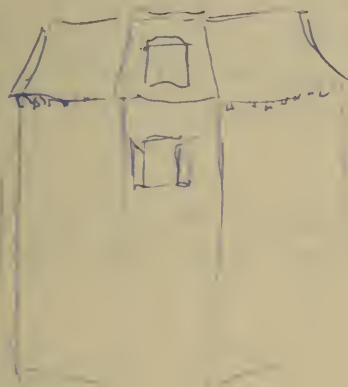
20 Oct 69
R. PartanBACK BAY STUDY OUTLINEControls for High-Rise Development on Beacon Street

1. Absolute height - 200 feet
2. Horizontal frontage along Beacon Street shall be less than 100 feet.
3. Building subject to Design Review by BRA.

These are von Moltke recommendations.

They represent our feelings as to what the Absolute Maximum dimensions should be for any tower. However, we remain opposed to high-rise construction in the residential district.

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20 Oct 69
P. Partan

BACK BAY STUDY OUTLINE

Limiting Parking to Back Bay Residents

Advantages:

1. Provide guaranteed parking for residents.
2. Provide a check on student parking.
3. One and two above will make a more desirable residential area.

Necessary Actions

1. Legislation or a regulation which must be passed on by the state DPW.
2. Removal of generators of parking other than residences
(Provision of fully adequate parking to service entertainment uses is not feasible in the area).

Problems: (from a discussion with Commissioner McGrath)

1. DPW approval of regulation.
2. Political problem of "rationing" spaces.
3. Parking for guests.
4. Administrative tangle.
5. Should be capable of city-wide application.

If the above problems can be solved, there are no apparent legal problems, and there are substantial benefits.

Saltousta||

20 Oct 69
R. Partan

BACK BAY STUDY OUTLINE

Consequences of Building High-Rise on North Side of Beacon

1. Any high-rise built here will make it difficult to limit similar construction along all of Beacon and may reintroduce high-rise proposals along Commonwealth and Marlborough. These areas will continue to suffer from speculation which militates against rehabilitation and preservation..
2. The issue of "spot zoning" will arise immediately if an attempt is made to limit high-rise to specific sites. "Spot zoning" can be done over and over again until all is gone.
3. The corner sites on Beacon, some of which are owned by schools, will be specially subject to speculation.
4. High-rise construction will introduce an emphatically new scale which is not compatible with the objective of environmental preservation.
5. A number of architecturally valuable and fully tenanted buildings would be demolished to provide sites for towers on Beacon.
6. *skans* possibility that schools may go high-rise + increase student population
If land is developed, controls should insure residential use
(dormitories controlled through zoning code)

REHABILITATION FUNDS FOR THE BACK BAY

There appear to be two programs under which the Back Bay could qualify. One is the Rehabilitation Loan Program under Section 312, which provides for direct low interest loans from the Department of Housing and Urban Development for rehabilitation of residential property. The first requirement for the area would be to become certified as a 312 project. The interest rate under this loan is 3% per annum. The mortgage could be given for as long as twenty years. Currently, under this program, the maximum loan amount is \$14,500 per dwelling unit, or the cost of rehabilitation, whichever is less. There is now in Congress a bill to strike out some of the eligibility requirements. Both the House and Senate and their bills have agreed to strike out the provision limiting the amount of income eligibility requirement presently in existence.

Two other requirements now in effect, which will probably have to be met even under the bill before Congress, is that the property will have to be residential in nature and occupied by the owner. Also, the property should be in need of rehabilitation and be in violation of the local housing and similar codes.

The 312 Program has had limited success because of the availability of Federal funds, and because of the income criteria. To qualify the Back Bay under the 312 Program would require a hearing before the City Council in which the determination would have to be met that at least 20% of the buildings in the area are in need of rehabilitation. By making this determination and certifying it to the Secretary of H.U.D., the Back Bay would be eligible for the 312 loan program. Secondly, the City must have a workable program. Thirdly, the area must be planned for rehabilitation under a Concentrated Code Enforcement within a reasonable time following certification.

Another Federal vehicle which the Back Bay may utilize for rehabilitation is the above mentioned Concentrated Code Enforcement Program. Under Section 117 of the Housing Act, financial assistance may be authorized in the form of grants to cities, municipalities, and counties for the purpose of carrying out Concentrated Code Enforcement Programs in deteriorating or deteriorated areas.

This program is currently in existence in the City of Boston in a part of Dorchester and Jamaica Plain under the supervision of the Commissioner of the Department of Housing Inspection. It would be up to this department to qualify the Back Bay as a Code Enforcement area. The above appear to be the only two programs that could be applied to the Back Bay because of the economic background of the area.

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October 24, 1969

Mr. Lewis Mumford
Amenia, New York

Dear Lewis:

I am writing to you at this time because John Warner will speak on the symposium a week from tomorrow (Saturday, November 1) at the Boston Museum about the Boston Redevelopment Authority's plans for the Back Bay. People within the BRA who have the best interests of the Back Bay in mind have suggested that Warner may make public statements endorsing high-rise building within the Back Bay. As you know, the 1967 Back Bay Development Plan, pushed through by the Mayor before his term was up, suggests high-rise development on major corners of Commonwealth Avenue; and as a result of the two high-rise buildings on Beacon Street, we are currently being faced with a 200 unit, super high-rise proposal on the north corner of Beacon and Dartmouth to replace 15 or so of the buildings there. It would be the first building required to have off-street parking, and estimates are that it would mean, since one cannot go underground, three stories of parking across from houses on the south side of Beacon Street as well as a 300-foot "tower."

I do not presume to know what your opinion would be about possible high-rise development in the Back Bay, but I am unequivocally opposed to it and hope you are also. I understand Mr. Warner, who has a portion of his staff working preparing what he will say at the symposium, has paid little attention to the historical, architectural, and aesthetical value of the Back Bay as a continuing, viable residential district. It is a district, incidentally, in which a bit of research into land value and social structure shows to be increasing in economic value and social stability. Mr. Warner may also not realize that with the construction of the Prudential Center and a new

FOR THE BOARD OF
DIRECTORS
OF THE

Lewis Mumford

October 24, 1969

interest in living in town, there is a demand for residential row housing of the kind the Back Bay superbly provides, and there is no necessity for the intrusion of new money to convert the area into a stable residential district, as was previously argued.

If you felt it possible to write to Mr. Warner immediately, emphasizing the reasons for preserving the Back Bay residential district in the form in which it now is, without the intrusion of high-rise buildings and without increased density of use, it might provide the kind of stimulus necessary to consider these values before he makes any public statements. His address is:

John Warner, Director
Boston Redevelopment Authority
Boston City Hall
1 City Hall Square
Boston, Mass.

Judy and I send our best to you both and hope we see you on Saturday next, at the symposium.

Warm regards,

Henry A. Millon
Associate Professor of the History of Architecture

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Boston Landmarks Commission
Room 911, Boston City Hall
Boston, Massachusetts
October 27, 1969

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Mr. John D. Warner, Director
Boston Redevelopment Authority
Boston City Hall
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Mr. Warner:

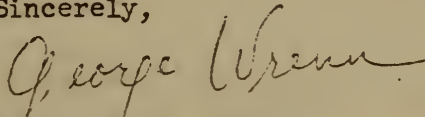
The members of the Boston Landmarks Commission at their regularly scheduled meeting on October 20th voted unanimously to recommend opposition to a recent proposal to construct two 300-foot residential towers on the northern corners of Beacon and Dartmouth Streets in the Back Bay. Your concern for the quality of Boston's urban environment prompts the Commission to bring this recommendation to your attention.

In creating the Back Bay Residential District and the Back Bay Architectural Commission, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has recognized the area's extraordinary architectural and environmental importance; moreover, the District is currently under consideration for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places and for an even more significant form of recognition, designation as a National Historic Landmark.

As an example of late nineteenth century building and city planning, the Back Bay is unique in the United States. Although the area contains a number of buildings that are historically and architecturally important in their own right, the whole environment of the Back Bay is greater than the sum of its parts. The primary value of the area lies not in any particular building or group of buildings that might be demolished for new construction, but in the harmonious consistency and continuity of its streetscapes, a vital aspect of which is the uniformity of building heights.

It is the conviction of the Commission that the height of buildings in the Back Bay Residential District should be strictly maintained at the present five to seven story level and that building activity inconsistent with this principle should be suspended until a study of the economic implications of development in the Back Bay can be completed and assessed.

Sincerely,



George Wrenn, Chairman
Boston Landmarks Commission

GW:lg

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October 30, 1969

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*ex officio

Mayor Kevin White
Boston City Hall
1 City Hall Square
Boston, Mass.

Dear Mayor White:

Changes within the Back Bay Residential District should not endanger the coherence and continuity of the area as a whole. The Back Bay is a unique planning achievement of the late 19th century. It has no equal anywhere in the country. Its streets, as you know well, still contain excellent living and walking spaces for contemporary life. Its spaces are among the best urban residential spaces in America and are known throughout the world. Back Bay is the Bath or Turin or Bordeaux of America.

In addition to its obvious architectural and residential qualities it is the scene of some of the most important events of late 19th and early 20th century history. The social, economic, and political history of New England and the United States cannot be written without referring to those who lived in the Back Bay.

The history of late 19th century architecture in the United States can be read from its buildings and its connection to the Fenway links it to the first metropolitan park system in the United States.

High rise structures on the corners of Commonwealth Avenue, on Arlington Street, on the north side of Beacon Street or anywhere within the area that significantly alter the density will seriously damage its value as a stable residential district. The situation in the area has greatly changed since the 1967 Back Bay Development Plan was approved. The construction of the Prudential Center and the proposed development around the



Mayor Kevin White

October 30, 1969

Christian Science Church as well as John Hancock all contribute to a new awareness of the Back Bay as a desirable residential area. Land values are rising (not due solely to speculation about possible high-rise development); new interest in intown living, the suspension of granting licenses to fraternities and rooming houses all contribute towards a stable residential district unlike that which it was only a short time ago. It would be an error to ascribe this renewed interest solely to the prospect of high rise development and the "influx of new money" into the area.

I am aware of the need for the increased tax monies that more dense development would provide. Need these come from the Back Bay Residential district? The BBRD as a whole is only about 200 acres, and the development proposed for the district in the Back Bay Development Plan represents less than 10% of the total anticipated investment. Is the damage done to the District worth this small sum? Adjacent to the Back Bay Residential District in the areas under development or adjacent to these areas there are areas of lesser architectural and historical value that are planned for development. In these locations the appeal of apartments would be equally high. And adjacent to these last areas there are areas further removed where dense high rise development will be beneficial.

I do not understand the rationale behind a procedure that requires each decision about development in the Back Bay to be a special local ad hoc decision. It would seem rational to see the Back Bay as part of a comprehensive Boston issue. Boston is rich in diversity. This diversity should be maintained when new development occurs. If areas like Beacon Hill, the Back Bay, perhaps portions of Charlestown and of the North and South Ends were to be preserved, following a comprehensive preservation plan, it would then be possible to cite both areas where development was encouraged or allowed and where viable, stable residential districts, such as the Back Bay Residential District, with historical and architectural value existed and would be preserved. If such a comprehensive plan were advantageous to the city, would not the Back Bay be one of the districts preserved?

The Back Bay Residential District is of such importance to Massachusetts, New England and the United States that it

Mayor Kevin White

October 30, 1969

is now being considered by the National Park Service for National Landmark status. High rise development within the District would jeopardize this protection and recognition. I urge you to consider, as you have in the past, opposition to what may endanger the quality of the Back Bay Residential District and to encourage a decision that will clearly serve the public interest of all the people of Boston.

Sincerely,

Henry A. Millon
President

HAM:nj

